

## Sunday, February 19

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 *But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (vv.16-18 NIV)

The desire of my heart (and I'll bet yours too) is to be more and more like Jesus. How does that happen? "As the Spirit of the Lord works within us," we are transformed. What must I do for the Spirit of the Lord to work in me? 1) Acknowledge he is Lord of All. 2) Accept that his saving grace applies to me personally. 3) Cooperate with the process of sanctification (being made holy). As a child I was told that you become like the company you keep. That sounded negative then, but now it sounds like a delightful promise. The more I hang around with the Holy Spirit, the more I become like Jesus. Thank You, Lord, that we are a reflection of your glory.

Just in case we missed it the other 147 times, the Psalms for the day direct us to praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

Proverbs 26:1-23; Psalms 148, 149, 150; Luke 9:18-27

## Monday, February 20

Psalms 25 *The LORD is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray.* (v.8 NLT)

To stray means to go away from where you belong. Our proverb for today says, "A person who strays from home is like a bird that strays from its nest" (v.8). *Seabiscuit*, a movie I saw recently is a true story about an abused horse. The racehorse, Seabiscuit, has great tenacity for overcoming life's obstacles. Seabiscuit doesn't have the right physical characteristics to be a racehorse, nor does he have the appropriate breeding papers. The horse's tenacious example encourages all of the characters in this true story to rise above the very difficult circumstances in their lives and fulfill their destinies. The trainer makes an observation regarding the abused horse, Seabiscuit. "They've had her running in circles until she doesn't know why she was born." That's a good analogy of my life when I stray from God. We were born to know Him, love Him, and serve Him. Where do we belong? As Christ followers we belong tucked into the Father's heart of love, safe under the shadow of His wing, following where He leads. When we stray His strong voice will call us back to the proper path.

Proverbs 27:1-6, 10-12; Philippians 2:1-13; John 18:15-18, 25-27

## **Tuesday, February 21**

Philippians 3:1-11 *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.* (vv.10-11)

I am writing this immediately following the power blackout that covered several states. Whenever one of these happens, it raises the awareness of our need for electrical power to maintain life, as we know it, in this present age. If we can see our need for power in the physical world then, how much more is our need for power in the spiritual realm? Power to do what? Power to put our fleshly lives to death and live according to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Power to love God and others and to accept His truth. Power to bring health to our hurting bodies and emotions. How do we get this power? We get it by faith (believing God). We surrender our lives to God and receive what He has already given.

Father God, I give you my whole life. I accept your suffering, death, and resurrection on my behalf. I ask you to fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Thank You, Father, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Proverbs 30:1-4, 24-33; Psalms 26, 28; John 18:28-38

## **Wednesday, February 22**

Hebrews 12:1-14 *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* (vv.10-11)

Discipline is not a pretty word. I shrink back when it comes time to consider my mouth, my weight, and my physical fitness. I often discipline myself because of an earthy image. Oh, how shortsighted of me! God disciplines us for eternity and to be usable to Him here on earth. The harvest is indeed ripe, but I am often distracted with trivial matters. He wants us to be sensitive to His voice at all times, discussing every decision with Him in the light of His mighty Truth. What area of my life is He asking me to correct today? I often care more about what others will think of me than what God thinks. This fear of man must go if I am to remain in God's holy presence. Do I have to try harder? No! I must repent and allow Him to do the rest. He died for me because He knew I couldn't work it out for myself.

Thank You, Father, for disciplining me as Your child.

Amos 5:6-15; Psalms 32, 95, 143; Luke 18:9-14

### **Thursday, February 23**

Philippians 3:12-21 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* (vv.12-14)

How can I be all that Jesus Christ wants me to be? How do I forget the past and press on? When I first came to “know” Christ there were many beliefs in my past that didn’t agree with God’s truth. Do I just turn my back on all that has gone before and start as if that day were day one? That really isn’t possible, is it? Our past keeps popping up until we deal with it.

My earthly father was inattentive and unable (or unwilling) to listen to me. I judged and condemned him for that. Because of my earthly father’s character flaw, I believed my heavenly Father was like that also. I became aware of that connection between my past experience and my present belief system through the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I asked God to forgive me for judging my father and then forgave my father for his shortcomings. God changed my heart so I could believe He was trustworthy and would listen to me.

Habakkuk 3:1-18; Psalm 37:1-18; John 17:1-8

### **Friday, February 24**

Philippians 4:1-9 *Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.* (vv.6-7)

Paul advises: 1) don’t worry, 2) pray about everything, 3) thank God for all He has done. What a simple recipe for constant peace and joy in our walk through this life!

We could probably change the order of Paul’s directions like this: 1) thank God for all He has done, 2) ask Him for what you need, 3) believe you’ve received it.

Lord, we choose Your way to peace today.

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalms 31, 95; John 17:9-19

## **Saturday, February 25**

John 17:20-26 *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”* (vv.20-21)

Jesus is praying for us. He’s asking his Father for unity in those who believe in him. As I look around I find real unity very scarce. To unite means to join together as one. In contrast, compromise means a settlement in which each side makes concessions. What does the process of reaching unity look like? If you and I were in disagreement over an issue, would talking about the issue bring us to unity? It might help to clarify the issue, but it wouldn’t bring us to unity, not if we were truly in disagreement.

If I asked the Holy Spirit how he stood on the issue and you asked the Holy Spirit how he stood on the issue, would he give each of us a different answer? No. Why do we need unity? So the world will believe. Is it worth seeking answers from the Holy Spirit so we can live in unity helping others to believe? I sure think so.

Ezekiel 39:21-29; Psalms 30, 32; Philippians 4:10-20

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